

**A long, long time ago,**

*A half-millennium or so  
Before the fax-machine,*

*Busy scribes who wondered why  
The paperwork kept mounting high  
Tried speeding the routine.*



*Blackletter style could not advance,*

# Blackletter

*And Humanist with solid stance*

# Humanist

*Stayed rooted in one place.*

*How could they boost the pace?*

*By accident or clever wile,  
The scribes devised a simpler style:  
Fast, yet clear. It made them smile.  
They began the *Italic* hand.*





... singing:

*Why, why, let handwriting die?*

*Pick up your pen once again for a try.*

*We need clear, easy letters that run till they fly.*

*Please don't let our handwriting die.*

*Never let our handwriting die.*





**1591**  
 nès pas grandement  
 o gens que pour la  
 le rompre vne grande

**1608**  
 ous les plus grands bie  
 ndition en la vie hum

**1733**  
 Lors que tous presagierent sa c  
 Si ces faits sont grâces. &  
 Roy: le plus grand des Roys.  
 Mais quand vostre bonce d'ine  
 & T. C.

**1743**  
 h h i j k k k l l m n n n o p p q r s t u  
 v E F G H I J K L M  
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

***But generation on generation  
 Of teachers added complication,  
 The centuries ran on —  
 Italic soon had gone,  
 As every letter started to ooze  
 A mass of loops and curlicues,  
 We struggled,  
     hung our heads,  
     and felt confused.***

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm  
 Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

***Though teachers loved those fancy curls  
 Of penmanship bedecked with swirls  
 And ornament supreme,  
 It made some children scream ...***

Nn Oo NO



*With years of work and a scratchy pen,  
Join and loop and join again,  
Over and under from end to end –  
Don't say we never tried.*



*We started singing:*

*Why, why, are we ready to cry?  
Let's pick up the pen once again for a try.  
We need clear, easy letters with a HOW and a WHY.  
Please don't let our handwriting die.  
Never let our handwriting die.*





*The looks of it kept slipping down,  
Mom and Dad began to frown,  
And scribble ruled the year,  
Good work did not appear ...*

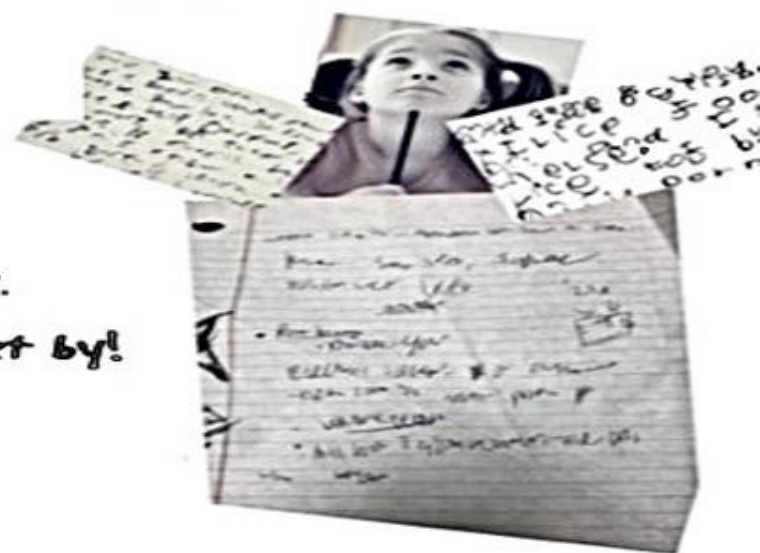
*Third-graders with a cursive text,  
We squirmed and strained and felt perplexed.*

*Print-then-cursive really vexed.*

*That way, the teaching died.*

*And we sang:*

*Why, why,  
does our handwriting die  
When we pick up our pen  
once again for a try?  
We need clear, speedy letters  
We barely got by!  
Please don't let  
our handwriting die ...  
never let  
our handwriting die!*







*Remedial sass in a summer class,  
I don't think I'll ever pass,  
Grades of D and falling faster ...  
Taking me down into disaster ...*

*The air in August choked with chalk  
As I listened to the teacher talk.  
I still remember that painful squawk:  
"Your writing's got to dance!"  
Well, it never got the chance ...*

*'Cause every time I moved my pen  
It wouldn't do what I wanted, when  
I had to swoop through the loops again ...  
I paid ... 'cause Italic died.*

*I started singing:*

*Why, why, let handwriting die?  
Got to pick up my pen once again for a try,  
I need clear, easy letters for hand and for eye ...  
Please don't let our handwriting die ...  
Never let our handwriting die ...*



*The learning specialist sang the blues  
When I expected some happy news,  
He just said “**Always type,**”  
then turned away ...*



*So I went down to the teacher's store  
That sold handwriting books before,  
But the store-clerk said:*

**“Nobody writes today ... ”**





*While in the classroom students snored,  
Computers wiped out chalk and board,  
Keyboard and cursive scribble warred.*

*No helpful word was spoken ...  
The inkwells all got broken ...*



*Handwriting suffered under stress,  
Memos and notes a scribbly mess,  
Standards moved, left no address,  
Betrayed, 'cause Italic died  
Till we sang:*

***Why, why, let handwriting die?***

*Let's pick up the pen once again for a try!*

*We need clear, easy letters that run till they fly ...*

*Please don't let our handwriting die ...*

*Never let our handwriting die ...*

***We started singing ...***

*We started singing ...*

*We started singing ...*

***We started WRITING !***